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## What do talents want?

### Work expectations in India, China, and Germany\*\*

International talent management becomes increasingly important, because companies compete on a global scale for qualified employees. Finding highly educated talent, however, is difficult, especially in the Asia-Pacific region. This research investigates the work expectations of Chinese (N=404), Indian (N=588), and German (N=257) students, the talent group from which companies hope to recruit their future workforce. Incorporating their specific expectations is essential; if these expectations are not met, decreases in job satisfaction, commitment, and performance are likely. Using factor analytic techniques, we develop a scale that reliably measures students' work expectations. A two-factor structure was established and generality was assessed across countries, age, gender, and study level. Findings show that students from all countries share more similarities than cultural differences might predict. Nevertheless the subtleties provide essential insights for international talent management and call for more targeted recruitment and retention strategies.

### Was wollen Talente? Arbeitserwartungen in China, Indien und Deutschland

Internationales Talentmanagement gewinnt zunehmend an Bedeutung, da Unternehmen in einem globalen Wettbewerb um qualifizierte Mitarbeiter stehen. Diese Studie befasst sich mit den Arbeitserwartungen von chinesischen (N=404), indischen (N=588) und deutschen (N=257) Studierenden – der Gruppe, aus der Unternehmen ihre zukünftigen Arbeitskräfte rekrutieren. Die Einbeziehung spezifischer Arbeitserwartungen ist vor allem für qualifizierte Talente notwendig. Sollten ihre Arbeitserwartungen nicht erfüllt werden, ist eine Verringerung von Arbeitszufriedenheit, Commitment und Arbeitsleistung wahrscheinlich. Unter der Verwendung von faktor-analytischen Methoden wird in diesem Artikel ein Erhebungsinstrument entwickelt, welches studentische Arbeitserwartungen reliabel misst. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass Studierende aus allen Ländern mehr Gemeinsamkeiten aufweisen, als kulturelle Unterschiede vermuten lassen. Dennoch bieten die festgestellten Besonderheiten wichtige Einblicke für internationales Talentmanagement und fordern gezielte Rekrutierungs- und Bindungsstrategien.

**Key words:** talent management, China, India, Germany, work expectations, students (JEL: M10, M12, M16, J24)

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## Introduction

In competitive (international) markets, organizational performance has become increasingly important, and globalization has led to a constant pressure to innovate, especially in high-growth markets. As talented employees positively influence organizational performance, talent is now seen as the most consistent and frequent factor affecting business success (Yeung, Warner, & Rowley, 2008). Having a skilled and committed workforce, who is willing to optimize and develop their talents, is not easily imitable by competitors and thus, talent may serve as a competitive advantage (Barney, 1991; Scullion & Collings, 2006). However, recruiting and retaining such employees has become increasingly difficult, given the “global war for talent,” especially since qualified human resources are scarce (Beechler & Woodward, 2009; Farndale, Scullion, & Sparrow, 2010; Hartmann, Feisel, & Schober, 2010; Michaels, Handfield-Jones, & Axelrod, 2001) and competition for talented personnel is high (Cheung, 2008; Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Hartmann et al., 2010; Ma & Trigo, 2008). Accordingly, “the capacity of organizations to attract, develop, motivate and retain talent will remain a critical strategic issue for the 21st century's knowledge economies” (Beechler & Woodward, 2009, p. 282).

Talent management has become increasingly important, especially for multinational companies, as they face a growing competition with national firms over qualified employees (Cheung, 2008; Hartmann et al., 2010; Ma & Trigo, 2008). While challenges for talent management are significant in Europe and the U.S., they are even more acute in emerging markets such as India and China (Bhatnagar, 2007; Budhwar & Varma, 2011; Farndale et al., 2010). In those countries, the availability of qualified personnel is limited (Beechler & Woodward, 2009; Farndale et al., 2010; Hartmann et al., 2010; Michaels et al., 2001). Additionally, high turnover rates indicate the need to adjust retention strategies (Beechler & Woodward, 2009; Hartmann et al., 2010).

The Asia-Pacific region, including countries such as India and China, is growing rapidly with an increasing need for talent (Budhwar & Khatri, 2001; Poon & Rowley, 2007). In the rankings of the ten largest economies in 2000 and 2010, China advanced from 7<sup>th</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> place, while India, which was not among the top 10 in 2000, moved to 9<sup>th</sup> place in 2010. These countries are projected to occupy 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> places, respectively, in 2020. In contrast, Germany dropped from 3<sup>rd</sup> place in 2000 to 4<sup>th</sup> place in 2010, and is projected to decline further to 6<sup>th</sup> place in 2020 (Franklin Templeton Investments, 2012; World Bank, 2010). Investments in China and India are additionally attractive given their favorable demographics; more so than countries in Europe, both India and China have large, relatively young, working-age populations (Budhwar & Varma, 2011; Gu, Wang, Sun, & Xu, 2010; The Economist, 2013). Given the growth prospects of India and China and the concomitant need for talent, research on international talent management strategies applicable to these countries is of special interest.

Recruitment of talent internationally is especially difficult for multinational companies, given the diverse cultural backgrounds involved in the recruitment process. Differences attributable to local values and culture among individuals suggest that talent might not be attracted to organizations in a uniform way (Hofstede, Hofstede, &

Minkov, 2010). Therefore, uniform recruitment strategies are not warranted, and scholars have long acknowledged the importance yet lack of research on such cultural differences in the challenge of attracting talent (Beechler & Woodward, 2009; Budhwar & Sparrow, 2002; Tarique & Schuler, 2010). In recruiting young employees from different cultural backgrounds, it is essential that human resource strategies pay attention to their diverse expectations and values.

Today's students are the major talent pool from which companies recruit their future employees (Bu & McKeen, 2000; Burke, 1994; Terjesen, Vinnicombe, & Freeman, 2007). Across disciplinary backgrounds, these students bring a specific set of values and expectations with them to the workplace (Garavan & Morley, 1997; Greenhaus, Seidel, & Marinis, 1983; Major, Kozlowski, Chao, & Gardner, 1995). These expectations relate to their beliefs about work conditions and job assignments. If their expectations are not met, it is likely that young professionals will experience a decrease in job satisfaction, commitment, and performance; thus, they are more likely to resign and look for other opportunities (Honore & Paine Schofield, 2012; Porter & Steers, 1973; Wanous, Poland, Premack, & David, 1992).

Students' expectations have changed as compared to previous generations; they believe that "there is more to life than work" (Diderichsen et al., 2011, p. 145), expect to have a balanced mix of family, leisure, and work (Bu & McKeen, 2000) as well as anticipate to have "a meaningful job, autonomy and the ability to use one's own discretion on the job" (Budhwar & Varma, 2011, p. 321). However, these expectations might differ across cultures; for example, Chinese students following the Confucian tradition are much more likely than Canadian students to put work duties above personal plans (Bu & McKeen, 2000). Given generational and cultural differences, scholars call for further cross-cultural research on potential employees and current students (Konrad, Ritchie, Lieb, & Corrigan, 2000). Individuals' expectations prior to entering the labor market influence their future career expectations and socialization within the organization; (Garavan & Morley, 1997; Scholarios, Lockyer, & Johnson, 2003); moreover, the workforce in multinational companies is becoming increasingly diverse (Cooke & Saini, 2012). Consequently, it is important to examine work expectations across cultural backgrounds.

Multinational companies are searching for effective international recruitment strategies (Tymon, Stumpf, & Doh, 2010); hence, knowing the expectations of students looking for employment will allow these companies to better target their efforts and particularize talent management strategies. What is therefore needed is a better understanding of the differences in work expectations across cultures, which will enable multinationals to adapt talent management strategies to different cultural contexts.

However, accounting for diverse work expectations across cultural contexts is difficult for academic researchers. First, there is limited prior research on cross-cultural student work expectations to guide research. Second, previously developed measures widely originate in a Western context and might not be equally reliable and valid in the Asia-Pacific region, since there is a scarcity of measures that are reliable and valid in diverse settings (Varma & Budhwar, 2012). Therefore, psychometrically sound measurement instruments are needed that assess work expectations across diverse cultural backgrounds.

We aim to address both of these gaps and draw on cross-sectional data from Germany, India, and China. These countries were specifically chosen to include two emerging economies that contrast with Germany, the most powerful economy in Europe. Furthermore, following previous research that compared students' intentions in the labor market, we chose countries that represent different cultures and economic ideologies (Baum & Kabst, 2013). Following other studies on career and work expectations, we specifically draw on a student population, because students are the major talent pool from which companies recruit their future employees (Bu & McKeen, 2000; Burke, 1994; Terjesen et al., 2007).

This study has several objectives: First, we measure work expectations across cultural and national contexts to be able to compare diverse student groups. Using this data we propose a work expectation scale that reliably measures work expectations of student populations across China, India, and Germany. Second, using this work expectation scale, we answer the following research questions: What, differences, if any, exist among the work expectations of students from China, India, and Germany? What are the implications of the findings for international talent management?

The article proceeds as follows: First, we present the literature review of the challenges for international talent management and work expectations of students with a specific focus on the countries we study. Based on this review, we generate hypotheses. The methods section describes the sample characteristics, data collection process, and data analytic procedures to test the hypotheses. Next, we present the findings from the analyses. Finally, we conclude with a discussion of the findings, their implications and the limitations of the study.

## **Literature review and hypotheses**

### ***Challenges for international talent management***

Multinational companies create competitive advantages with the help of a talented workforce (Farndale et al., 2010) and use talent management strategies to effectively recruit, bind, and retain qualified employees (Farndale et al., 2010; Hartmann et al., 2010; Tarique & Schuler, 2010). This requires an understanding of the differences across cultures for both recruiting and managing diverse employees (Farndale et al., 2010).

Multinational companies face significant talent management challenges, especially when recruiting in the Asia-Pacific region. For both China and India, differing norms regarding salaries and promotions may become an issue for retention if these expectations are not met. For example, young Indian professionals hired by multinational companies were found to have unrealistic expectations, such as a promotion shortly after starting their job (Budhwar & Varma, 2011; Farndale et al., 2010). These expectations were triggered through previous strategies of firms that emphasized a quick climb up the career ladder to attract talented employees (Farndale et al., 2010). Similar tendencies were found among young Chinese professionals, who are quite willing to quit their jobs if they do not find appropriate development possibilities or if they have better opportunities elsewhere (Hartmann et al., 2010; McKeen & Bu, 1998; Schinnenburg & Dankert, 2009). Interestingly, recent cross-national research finds that the lack of professional development possibility could potentially be caused by

high employee turnover; companies are reluctant to offer such possibilities to a workforce that constantly seems on the verge of leaving (Honore & Paine Schofield, 2012). Regardless of the directionality, voluntary turnover rates among managers in India are above the global average and amounts to 45% (Bhatnagar, 2007); for China, this number reaches as high as 20-30% (Thorsell, 2012). Even during the economic crisis of 2009, employers experienced double-digit voluntary turnover rates in India (13.8%) and China (10.3%) (CFO Innovation, 2009). Simultaneously, the demand for highly qualified managers who can work in a global environment will increase in the coming decades, further adding to the already existing talent shortage in both countries (Farrell & Grant, 2005).

For both China and India, the so-called “brain drain” additionally challenges recruitment. During the past decade, young people have increasingly graduated from universities outside their home countries or left their home countries shortly after graduation (Baruch, Budhwar, & Khatri, 2007; Cooke, 2011; Hartmann et al., 2010). Between 2000 and 2009, the number of Indian students graduating from universities outside their home country rose by 256%; in 2009 alone, 52,000 went to Europe and 105,000 to the U.S. to get a degree (Indian Times, 2012; New York Times, 2011). For China, about 70% of the students who have gone overseas are not returning (China Daily, 2007). However, there is some indication that those trends might change; the economic downturn in Europe and the U.S. is seen as one reason for international students to return to their home country (Sykes & Chaoimh, 2012). Additionally, students of Chinese ethnicity who were born overseas are increasingly regarding the economic opportunities in China as promising and are moving to their country of origin (China Daily, 2009). This makes talent management even more important for multinationals wishing to take advantage of reversing trends in the “brain drain.” To investigate the factors that influence students’ decisions to stay or leave the host country after graduation, Baruch and colleagues (2007) conducted a study among international business management students in the UK and the U.S. The authors found that student’s perception of employment opportunities in the host country has a positive effect on their intention to stay after graduation, whereas a well-perceived labor market in the home country has a negatively impact on their likelihood to stay. Additionally, students’ adjustment during their degree program, social support, and strength of family ties in the host country all influence students’ likelihood of staying.

Generally, multinational companies find it challenging to recruit qualified candidates. For both India and China, researchers identify a mismatch between the supply and demand in the education system. However, the concern is not only the supply but also the quality of the graduates searching for employment, which pose difficulties for multinational companies willing to hire (Budhwar & Varma, 2011; Cooke, 2011). In India, multinationals consider 75-85% of the graduates as not hireable (Anand, 2011) or insufficiently prepared (Budhwar & Varma, 2011), thereby finding it increasingly difficult to find qualified students for skilled positions. Even greater challenges face China, where 90% of graduates are regarded as not suitable to work for multinational companies (New York Times, 2010). According to a McKinsey study, human resource (HR) managers of multinational companies in emerging markets regard poor English skills, dubious educational qualifications, and cultural issues (e.g. lack of team work



experience, reluctance to take initiative or assume leadership roles) as the major obstacles in successful recruitment (Guthridge, Komm, & Lawson, 2008). However, these factors might not play out evenly across emerging markets, since many firms nowadays relocate to India due to the English language capabilities of the available talent pool (Budhwar, Luthar, & Bhatnagar, 2006).

The German context is slightly different. The employability of German graduates is high; one-and-a-half years after graduation, only 2% are unemployed (Schomburg, 2010). Nevertheless, the German economy faces a shortage of skilled labor, which cannot be met by the domestic supply (Institut der deutschen Wirtschaft Köln, 2008). Furthermore, due to changes in demographics, German companies will face a shortage of talent (World Economic Forum, 2011); the working age population (20-65 years) is expected to decrease from 59.7% in 2008 to 37.5 % in 2020 and 32.6 % in 2060 (Destatis, 2009). But even today, 70% of the employers face difficulties in recruiting qualified people (Manager Magazin, 2010; Spiegel Online, 2012).

German employees have longer job tenure and also seem to be less mobile compared to young professionals in other countries (Kattenbach, Lücke, Schlese, & Schramm, 2011). Other differences between German students and young talents from other countries lie in the extent to which they rank the attractiveness of employers. German students have a strong preference to work for domestic companies; 9 out of the top 10 rated employers of both engineering and management students are headquartered in Germany (Trendence, 2012b, 2012c; Universum, 2012b). In comparison, Indian students find only five engineering and six business domestic firms attractive enough to make their respective top 10 employer rankings (Universum, 2012c). Similar studies in China show that merely three to five domestic firms are ranked among the top 10 (Trendence, 2012a; Universum, 2012a). Even though the results of these individual studies differ slightly, the tendency is clear: Indian and Chinese respondents rank international companies among the top 10 attractive employers as opposed to German respondents, who find domestic companies more attractive. Therefore, we hypothesize that our sample will reflect this trend:

H1: German students have a lower desire to work for foreign multinational companies than Chinese and Indian students.

### ***Work expectations***

This paper draws on the theory of met expectations, which states the greater the congruency between a person's work expectations with the actual workplace reality, the greater the individual's job satisfaction and adjustment in the job (Porter & Steers, 1973; Wanous et al., 1992). Indeed, research has shown that young people bring with them a set of specific expectations when starting their new jobs (Garavan & Morley, 1997; Greenhaus et al., 1983; Major et al., 1995). Work expectations are defined as the preconceived notions of newly hired employees regarding their specific roles, responsibilities, and tasks in the context of the work as well as the nature of the work environment (Edwards, 1990; Major et al., 1995). Work expectations form as a result of the students' education and social experiences and might change over time due to influences from societal stereotypes, professional training, availability of information, and selection processes (Garavan & Morley, 1997).

Young professionals born after 1980 are regarded as highly influenced by their zealous parents, and rely on the internet for information and communication (Gu et al., 2010; Guthridge et al., 2008). Furthermore, they expect their job to be more meaningful, flexible and challenging with professional freedom, higher rewards, interesting work content, and better work-life balance as older employees (Budhwar & Varma, 2011; Guthridge et al., 2008; Honore & Paine Schofield, 2012; Karriere Spiegel, 2012). However, research is inconclusive whether or not these tendencies are similar or different across countries. Whereas Guthridge et al. (2008) caution that such “lifestyle goals might be similar in Europe and North America, but not in Asia or South America” (p. 53), Ralston, Egri, Stewart, Terpstra, and Kaicheng (1999) find young Chinese professionals to differ distinctly from their older counterparts (e.g. in their approach to risk taking), but to be more similar to young professionals from Western countries. Honore and Paine Schofield (2012) reason that young professionals are influenced by their local culture but similarly by the volatile global economy. Thus, it is important to apply a cross-country comparative perspective to investigate the similarities and differences of the next generation of young professionals.

Younger employees regard frequent changes of employers as opportunity to advance faster while gaining diverse experiences (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996). Advancement, however, does not always equate with climbing the career ladder; employees might also search for better personal satisfaction, work-life-balance, autonomy, and freedom (Baruch, 2004). Whereas previous generations often worked long-term in one or two companies throughout their career, the next generation of executives and managers work in five to seven different companies on a short-term basis, since they see their career processing in two-to-three year stages (Chambers, Foulon, Handfield-Jones, Hankin, & Michaels, 1998). Companies thus face higher risks of turnover than with previous employee generations (Guthridge et al., 2008). However, it is unclear to what extent, if at all, those generational differences are reflected in career planning processes across different cultural settings. Previous research shows that students from the Asia-Pacific region have generally a higher long-term orientation compared to students from Europe (Hofstede, 2001; The Chinese Culture Connection, 1987). More specifically, in rankings of 23 countries with higher ranks indicating long-term orientation, China ranks first, followed by India (7<sup>th</sup>) and (West-) Germany (14<sup>th</sup>). We therefore hypothesize:

H2: Chinese students are most likely to plan for their future, followed by Indian and German students (H2a). Among those who plan, Chinese students’ planning horizon is longer followed by Indian and German students (H2b).

Research on students’ work expectations across cultural backgrounds is scarce, especially research comparing the Asia-Pacific region to Europe, which poses challenges for multinational companies undertaking talent management. A notable exception is Baum and Kabst (2013), who examine engineering students from Hungary, China, India, and Germany. Looking at different aspects of the employer image, the authors identify working atmosphere, work-life comfort, career opportunities, as well as task and payment attractiveness as influencing factors of students’ intention to apply for a job. Of these aspects, the authors find differences across countries on the work-life

comfort dimension, which consists of items related to the attractiveness of the company's location, importance of work-life balance, and availability of flexible work hours. Ultimately, Indian students are more likely to be attracted by these aspects followed by German and thereafter Chinese students. The authors reason that the moderation effect of the national background may be due to group-orientated economic ideologies (e.g. China) versus more individual oriented ideologies (e.g. Germany and India).

Besides these differences, Baum and Kabst (2013) find striking similarities across national context. They confirm that the next generation of talented employees expect their future employees to provide development opportunities (Sturges & Guest, 2001), but find no differences among countries. Students from India, Germany, and China are equally attracted to organizations that address students' development expectations. Furthermore, Baum and Kabst (2013)'s results show that the level of compensation is still an influential factor in the decision to apply for a job, but it is less important than work-life balance or advancement opportunities. Other studies that look at comparisons of payment levels and development opportunities mirror their findings. A study among British students indicates that they valued development possibilities more than high compensation and rewards (Terjesen et al., 2007). Overall, Baum and Kabst (2013) find more commonalities than differences in their sample of students and conclude that "companies [have] the opportunity to similarly attract applicants from different countries in the Atlantic and the Asia- Pacific regions" (p. 10). Based on the above discussion, we hypothesize:

H3: Indian students value aspects of their work-life comfort more than German and Chinese students.

H4: Students from all three countries have equally high development expectations.

H5: Students assign development possibilities in their employment greater importance than salary levels.

### ***Gender differences***

Besides cultural differences regarding work expectations, previous research also identified differences according to students' gender (Machung, 1989; Terjesen et al., 2007). It is advisable for multinational companies to pay attention to gender differences, since the female labor force participation is considerable in all countries we study. With 70% female participation, China has one of the highest rates worldwide; Germany (53%) and India (34%) have significantly lower rates, but even these rates are substantial and predicted to increase further over time (United Nations, 2010).

Terjesen and colleagues (2007) investigate differences in desired organizational attributes of graduating students in the UK and find that men are more likely to value a high starting salary, whereas women put more emphasis on less tangible attributes such as "really care about their employees as individuals," "internationally diverse mix of colleagues," and "relatively stress-free working environment." Those findings are echoed in a U.S. study: male undergraduate students indicate that money comes first, while female students hope to help others and to enjoy their work (Machung, 1989). Those findings resulted from studies in Europe and North America; however, we do



not know to what extent, if at all, those gender differences apply to countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Therefore, we hypothesize:

H6: There are gender differences in students work expectations and they vary across countries.

The hypotheses will be tested using a student sample from China, India, and Germany as described below.

## Methods

### *Recruitment, data collection, and sample characteristics*

This study is based on a sample of convenience of university students and consists of three sub-samples: 1) students enrolled in management and international management study programs in both undergraduate and graduate degrees from the German University of Applied Sciences (N=257), 2) undergraduate students enrolled in international management programs from a Chinese university (N=404), and 3) management and engineering students from in both undergraduate and graduate degree programs from three Indian universities (N=588). Among the whole sample, 57% were female. The average age was 22 years (SD=1.82). The sample was 47% Indian, 32% Chinese, and 21% German. About 80% of the students were enrolled in undergraduate programs. Additional demographic information is displayed in Table 1.

**Table 1: Study sample as compared to national statistics**

| Country             | Germany (n=257) | China (n=404)   | India (n=588)   |
|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| % female (study)    | 65              | 48              | 64              |
| % female (national) | 57 <sup>a</sup> | 48 <sup>a</sup> | 41 <sup>b</sup> |

Note: Data are based on the overall student population.

<sup>a</sup> Unesco (2010)

<sup>b</sup> Kasturi (2011)

Students were recruited in classroom settings. They were assured that their participation was completely voluntary and that they could terminate participation at any time without their data being used. The survey instrument was administered in the English language.

### *Survey instrument*

*Socio-demographics:* As socio-demographic variables, we measured participants' age, gender, country of birth, and study level. *Age* is a continuous variable measuring participants' year of birth. *Gender* is dichotomized with male=1, female=0. *Country of birth* was determined to exclude foreign students and ensure that only students from India, Germany, and China participated in the study. *Study level* was measured asking participants if they are currently enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate program (undergraduate=1, graduate=0).

*Future workplace:* Students were asked to rank their top choices of workplace. Choices were state-owned enterprise, private domestic enterprise, private foreign enterprise, government, and NGO/nonprofit organization. We recoded the responses

for private foreign enterprise to a desirability score ranging from 1 to 3, with 3 indicating highest desirability for foreign enterprises as future workplace and 1 indicating lowest desirability.

*Future life plans:* Students were asked if they *plan for the future* (yes=1, no=0). To assess the individual planning horizon, they were asked a follow up question: If you plan for the future, please specify the *planning horizon* (in years).

*Work expectations:* Students were asked to rate items related to work expectations on a 5-point Likert-scale ranging from very important (5) to very unimportant (1). Seventeen of the 22 items were taken from already existing scales. Eight items were taken from Hurst and Good (2009), who measured pre-entry job expectation among college seniors. Their scale reached high levels of reliability with a high coefficient alpha ( $\alpha=.83$ ). Three items were taken from Clark (1997), who assessed work values (e.g. having good relationships with my colleagues) among a sample of British citizens. Participants were asked to rank the two most important work values. In our research, we only use the item stems on our survey instrument, which is measured on a Likert-scale. Utilizing item stems that were found to be reliable in previous studies has been recommended (Fowler, 1995; Spector, 1992). Five items were taken from Super & Sverko (1995), who researched life roles and values (e.g. learning new things in my job). Five additional items were generated pertaining to work expectations (e.g. opportunity to do something worthwhile, reputation of the organization, location of the organization, recognition through supervisor, and social benefits).

### ***Procedure***

Work expectation is a latent construct and cannot be directly measured (DeVellis, 2003; Spector, 1992). Given the diverse cultural background of the participants in this study, we aim to investigate the extent to which the scale can be used equally effective in all cultural settings. Therefore, we use exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis to examine the dimensionality of the scale before testing our hypotheses. The procedure is described below.

*Exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis:* To analyze the dimensionality of the work expectation scale and to establish construct validity, we randomly split the full sample ( $N = 1249$ ) into two; exploratory common factor analysis was done on the first half of the sample ( $N=625$ ), and confirmatory analysis was done on the second half ( $N=624$ ). Common factor analysis with squared multiple correlations as initial communality estimates were applied for three to six factor models rotated according to varimax, equamax, and promax criteria for the work expectation scale (Snook & Gorsuch, 1989). Each model was evaluated for its ability to produce dimensions that a) satisfy the minimum constraints for Cattell's scree test (Cattell, 1966), Velicer's minimum-average partialing test (MAP; Velicer, 1976) and parallel factoring of normal random variables (Buja & Eyuboglu, 1992) on the basis of 100 replications; b) retain at least three items with salient loadings, where loadings of at least .40 are considered salient; c) yield high internal consistency ( $\alpha \geq .70$ ); d) remain invariant across models; e) produce the highest hyperplane count (Yates, 1987) and f) make theoretical sense in terms of parsimonious coverage (i.e. mutually exclusive assignment of items to factors, maximum numbers of items retained) (Gorsuch, 1983).

To investigate if the scale holds up across cultural contexts as well as for other criteria, we assessed the generality of the factor solution derived for the full sample with structures of sub-samples (e.g. age groups, gender, country, and study level). In these analyses, Wrigley-Neuhaus coefficients of congruence were calculated to assess matching factor patterns across groups (Fabrigar, Wegener, MacCallum, & Strahan, 1999). Afterwards, the resultant dimensions of the work expectation scale were introduced to higher-order factor analysis and to variance partitioning in order to reveal scale variations that were both unique and reliable (Harman, 1976; Wrigley & Neuhaus, 1955).

Finally, confirmatory analyses were conducted using confirmatory, oblique, and item clustering, where hypothesized factor membership for items was based on the common factoring, and items were permitted to migrate iteratively to alternative factors that better explained the item variance (Anderberg, 1973; Harman, 1976)

*Bivariate and multivariate analysis:* To predict the likelihood of choosing international companies as future workplace (H1), we conducted a series of ordered logistic regression analyses. Model 1 shows the main effect of country on the dependent variable. Model 2 adds demographic information (age, gender, study level) as independent variables. Model 3 adds whether or not a student plans for the future. Model 4 includes student's work expectations. Finally, Model 5 contains all variables.

To test hypotheses 2-6, we conducted a series of one-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) and independent sample t-tests. To test the hypotheses, we first utilize the dimensions of the work expectations scale, since multi-item scales are more rigorous and reliable compared to single items (DeVellis, 2003; Spector, 1992). Additionally, we draw on relative rankings of item mean values to further explore to what extent item behavior differs across culture and gender.

Logistic regression analyses, analyses of variance, and independent sample t-tests were done using STATA 11.2; factor analytic analyses were conducted with SAS 9.3.

## Results

### *Item analysis and missing data*

Skewness and kurtosis was unproblematic. Initial internal consistency of the whole work expectation scale was high ( $\alpha=.85$ ). Item-total correlations were overall positive. Missing data was below 15%, thus listwise deletion was used (Allison, 2010); in total 78 cases (12%) were deleted during factor analysis.

### *Factor analysis*

For the work expectation scale, iterative factor solutions were tested for one to six factors and assessed against the stated criteria. The two-factor promax rotated ( $k = 3$ ) model was superior and satisfied all criteria. Models with more factors produced factor scores with unsatisfactory internal consistency or only two salient items. Salience was found for 16 of the 22 items. One item ("having a well-defined career path") was removed because it loaded on both factors (Comrey, 1988). The final factor solution as well as component items, factor loadings, item-total correlations, and internal consistencies are shown in Table 2. Following ascending factor loadings, the factors were named: Pay & Benefits (10 items, e.g. work environment) and Values & Development

(5 items, e.g. opportunity to do something worthwhile). Pay & Benefits consists of items that pertain to more objective, extrinsic, and tangible work expectations, whereas items that load on Values & Development are more subjective, intrinsic, and less tangible.

**Table 2: Dimensional structure of the work expectations scale**

| Variable  | Exploratory common factor analysis |                             | Confirmatory oblique principal-components-cluster analysis |                                  |                   |                           |
|---|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|----------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
|   | Equamax loading                    | Promax loading <sup>b</sup> | R2 with own factor <sup>c</sup>                            | R2 with next factor <sup>d</sup> | Structure loading | Item-total r <sup>e</sup> |
| <b>Factor 1: Pay &amp; Benefits (<math>\alpha=.79</math>)</b>       |                                    |                             |  |                                  |                   |                           |
| Good standard of living   | 0.63                               | 0.66                        | 0.46   | 0.08                             | 0.68              | 0.50                      |
| Work environment  | 0.63                               | 0.64                        | 0.47   | 0.13                             | 0.68              | 0.56                      |
| Making a lot of money   | 0.52                               | 0.59                        | 0.28   | 0.01                             | 0.53              | 0.49                      |
| Appropriate pay   | 0.54                               | 0.57                        | 0.33   | 0.06                             | 0.57              | 0.49                      |
| Social benefits   | 0.55                               | 0.55                        | 0.43   | 0.11                             | 0.65              | 0.51                      |
| Being successful <sup>e</sup>                                       | 0.49                               | 0.45                        | -  | -                                | 0.48              | 0.42                      |
| Location of company   | 0.42                               | 0.44                        | 0.21   | 0.04                             | 0.46              | 0.39                      |
| Organizational reputation   | 0.46                               | 0.44                        | 0.35   | 0.12                             | 0.59              | 0.43                      |
| Work-life balance   | 0.43                               | 0.43                        | 0.32   | 0.11                             | 0.56              | 0.40                      |
| Recognition through supervisor                                      | 0.44                               | 0.42                        | 0.33   | 0.15                             | 0.58              | 0.49                      |
| Good relationship with colleagues                                   | 0.42                               | .                           | -  | -                                | -                 | -                         |
| <b>Factor 2: Values &amp; Development (<math>\alpha=.71</math>)</b> |                                    |                             |  |                                  |                   |                           |
| Making the world a better place                                     | 0.62                               | 0.67                        | 0.44   | 0.03                             | 0.66              | 0.41                      |
| Opportunity to do something worthwhile                              | 0.64                               | 0.67                        | 0.49   | 0.09                             | 0.70              | 0.53                      |
| Helping people in need  | 0.59                               | 0.60                        | 0.51   | 0.09                             | 0.71              | 0.52                      |
| Making use of own knowledge   | 0.48                               | 0.42                        | 0.47   | 0.20                             | 0.68              | 0.43                      |
| Learning new things   | 0.44                               | 0.40                        | 0.50   | 0.11                             | 0.71              | 0.43                      |

Note: Items are abbreviated for convenient presentation. Entries are rounded to two decimals. Exploratory common factor analysis was performed on a random subsample (N=625) and confirmatory oblique principal-components-cluster analysis was performed on the second part of the sample (N=624).

a Values are Pearson product-moment-correlations, with the respective item excluded from total factor score

b Values are promax loadings (k=3) where hyperplane count is optimized, and which were estimated from an initial equamax structure

c R2 for an variables own factor indicates the proportion of the variable variance explained by the other variables in the hypothesized factor structure

d R2 for a variables next factor indicates the variance explained by items in the next best factor.

e Item "Being successful" migrated to factor 2 during confirmatory oblique principal-components cluster analysis. Structure loading on factor 2 was .65. The item will be kept on Factor 1, as its removal decreases internal consistency by .02.

To confirm the composition of the final two factor solution based on the first sample, the items were subjected to oblique, multiple-group, principal-components cluster analysis (Anderberg, 1973; Harman, 1976) using the second half of the sample. Hy-

pothesized factor membership was based on the exploratory analysis, and items were permitted to migrate iteratively to factors that better explained item variance. One item (“being successful”) migrated from its hypothesized factor Pay & Benefits to the other factor, Values & Development. Since internal consistency of factor 1 would drop to .77 if removed, the item was kept on factor 1. Despite the migration of one item, the average item variance accounted for by the hypothesized factors was 4.20 times larger than that for the best alternative solution. These results provide additional support for the reported factor solution.

Further support for the interpretability of the two work expectation dimensions (Pay & Benefits and Values & Development) is produced through variance components analysis. Here, the correlation matrix from the dimensions is submitted to second-order common factoring. Table 3 shows a moderate correlation ( $r=.40$ ) among the dimensions. With second-order communalities functioning as indicators of common variance, one third of the variance conveyed by the work expectation dimensions remained both unique and reliable for interpretation.

**Table 3: Intercorrelation and variance components of work expectation structure (N=1249)**

| Dimension            | Correlation |          | Proportion of variance |             |       |
|----------------------|-------------|----------|------------------------|-------------|-------|
|                      | Factor 1    | Factor 2 | Common                 | Specific    | Error |
| Pay & Benefits       |             | .        | 0.40                   | <i>0.39</i> | 0.21  |
| Values & Development | 0.40        | .        | 0.40                   | <i>0.31</i> | 0.29  |
| Average              |             |          | 0.40                   | <i>0.35</i> | 0.25  |

Note: Intercorrelations are derived through exploratory common factoring. All values are rounded to two decimals.

a Common reflects the total proportion of common variance conveyed by a dimension

b Specificity indicates the proportion of variance that is both reliable and unique to a particular dimension for its reliability coefficient. Specificity values that exceed their error variance (where error variance = 1- reliability) are considered significant and are italicized.

In a next step, we examined whether or not the identified structure hold for certain relevant subsets, which is of special importance given the diverse student populations in our sample. We tested for generality across country, gender, age, and study level. For each subset, common factoring was repeated independently, and the factor pattern for the full sample was compared to that for each subset by deeming variables with loadings of at least .40 salient, and others non-salient. The agreement of factor patterns was tested with Wrigley-Neuhaus coefficients of congruence (Wrigley & Neuhaus, 1955). Entries in table 4 indicate that all factors derived from independent subsets of the data set achieved high congruence with the factors derived for the sub-samples. Average similarity ranged from .92 to 1.00, and average dissimilarity ranged from .26 to .58.



**Table 4: Coefficients of congruence for generality of work expectation structure**

| Sample size          | Age <sup>a</sup> |                   |                  | Gender <sup>b</sup> |                   | Country           |                  |                  | Study Level       |                  |
|----------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|
|                      | 18-21            | 22                | 23-34            | male                | female            | India             | Germany          | China            | Under-graduate    | Graduate         |
| N                    | 471              | 376               | 381              | 541                 | 706               | 588               | 257              | 404              | 1005              | 244              |
| Work Expectations    |                  |                   |                  |                     |                   |                   |                  |                  |                   |                  |
| Pay & Benefits       | <i>.98 (.53)</i> | <i>1.00 (.56)</i> | <i>.99 (.44)</i> | <i>1.00 (.57)</i>   | <i>1.00 (.49)</i> | <i>1.00 (.54)</i> | <i>.97 (.26)</i> | <i>.99 (.58)</i> | <i>1.00 (.53)</i> | <i>.99 (.54)</i> |
| Values & Development | <i>.98 (.43)</i> | <i>.99 (.56)</i>  | <i>.97 (.58)</i> | <i>1.00 (.53)</i>   | <i>.99 (.56)</i>  | <i>.96 (.50)</i>  | <i>.92 (.37)</i> | <i>.99 (.53)</i> | <i>1.00 (.53)</i> | <i>.98 (.57)</i> |

Note: Entries are Wrigley-Neuhaus coefficients (Guadagnoli & Velicer, 1991). Non-parenthetical values indicate similarity of the respective factor extracted to the counterpart for a given sub-sample. Parenthetical values indicate similarity of the specified factor to the alternative (non-counterpart) factor. Coefficients  $\geq .70$  are considered appreciable and appear in italics.

<sup>a</sup> 21 cases missing.

<sup>b</sup> 2 cases missing.

### *Hypotheses testing*

Descriptive statistics and correlations between the variables are shown in table 5. The means for the two work expectation factors show that, on average, respondents rated both dimensions equally high. Almost 80% of the respondents indicated that they plan for their future, with a mean length of 5.5 years. Desirability of working in foreign enterprises ranges slightly below the midpoint.

**Table 5: Descriptive statistics and correlations**

| Variables                   | Range             | M     | SD   | Gender   | Age      | India    | Germany  | China    | Study-level | Plans   | Planning horizon | Foreign | Pay & Benefits | Values & Dev. |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------|------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-------------|---------|------------------|---------|----------------|---------------|
| Gender (Male)               | 0-1               | 0.43  | 0.50 | 1.00     |          |          |          |          |             |         |                  |         |                |               |
| Age                         | 18-34             | 22.10 | 1.82 | .09**    | 1.00     |          |          |          |             |         |                  |         |                |               |
| India                       | 0-1               | 0.47  | 0.50 | .16****  | -.23**** | 1.00     |          |          |             |         |                  |         |                |               |
| Germany                     | 0-1               | 0.21  | 0.40 | -.09**   | .41****  | -.48**** | 1.00     |          |             |         |                  |         |                |               |
| China                       | 0-1               | 0.32  | 0.47 | -.10***  | -.11***  | -.65**** | -.35**** | 1.00     |             |         |                  |         |                |               |
| Study level (Undergraduate) | 0-1               | 0.80  | 0.39 | -.14**** | -.34**** | -.34**** | 0.02     | .34****  | 1.00        |         |                  |         |                |               |
| Plan for Future             | 0-1               | 0.78  | 0.41 | .05+     | 0.01     | .08**    | 0.03     | -.11**** | -.07*       | 1.00    |                  |         |                |               |
| Planning horizon            | 0-78 <sup>a</sup> | 5.49  | 6.24 | .11**    | -.06+    | .14****  | -.15**** | -.01     | -.09**      | 1.00    | 1.00             |         |                |               |
| Foreign Private Enterprise  | 1-3               | 2.31  | 0.75 | -.02     | -.10***  | .05+     | -.14**** | .06*     | 0.03        | .08**   | .10**            | 1.00    |                |               |
| Pay & Benefits              | 1-5               | 4.17  | 0.46 | -.11***  | -.17**** | .24****  | -.17**** | -.11**** | 0.00        | .13**** | 0.01             | .14**** | 1.00           |               |
| Values & Development        | 1-5               | 4.16  | 0.56 | 0.03     | -.15**** | .47****  | -.32**** | -.23**** | -.12****    | .14**** | .07*             | .06+    | .40****        | 1.00          |

Note: Sample size varies from 1146 to 1249 due to missing data.

+ $p \leq .10$ , \* $p \leq .05$ , \*\* $p \leq .01$ , \*\*\* $p \leq .001$ , \*\*\*\* $p \leq .0001$ . Values are rounded to two decimals.

<sup>a</sup> 78 might be considered an outlier, the next smaller value is 55 years.

A series of ordered logistic regression analyses was conducted to test hypothesis 1 (*German students have a lower desire to work for foreign multinational companies than Chinese and Indian talents*). Missing data was not problematic (<15%) for the overall data set, but only for specific models (especially models 4 and 5). We ran the analyses using list-wise deletion and reran them after imputing the data using multiple imputation by chained equations (Allison, 2010). No differences were found; therefore, we report on the models using list-wise deletion.

Model 1 to 5 show that hypothesis 1 can be confirmed (see table 6); German students regard working for a foreign company less desirable compared to Indian or Chinese students. This is consistent with previous findings (Trendence, 2012b, 2012c). Model 1 shows the main effect; Chinese students are twice (OR=2.09  $p \leq .0001$ ) as likely and Indian students 1.95 times (OR=1.95,  $p \leq .0001$ .) as likely as German students to find foreign companies desirable. This effect holds up across models. When demographic characteristics are added in Model 2, the effect is only slightly reduced in size, but is still highly statistically significant (C:  $p \leq .0001$ ; I:  $p = .001$ ). When students' future life planning behavior is added in Model 3, those who plan for the future are 1.5 times as likely to find foreign companies desirable (OR=1.54,  $p = .002$ ). Model 4 adds the two work expectation dimensions. We find that Pay & Benefits is positively related to desirability to work in a foreign company (OR=1.88,  $p \leq .0001$ ). For each additional unit increase in Pay & Benefits, the odds of a student regarding foreign companies as desirable increases by 88%, controlling for demographics. This effect remains in the full model (Model 5), when both work expectations and future life plans are controlled for. While there is a statistically significant difference between the extent to which German students desire to work for foreign companies compared to Indian and Chinese students, there is no such differences when we compare Chinese to Indian students ( $\chi^2(1) = .59$ ,  $p = .44$ , analysis not shown).

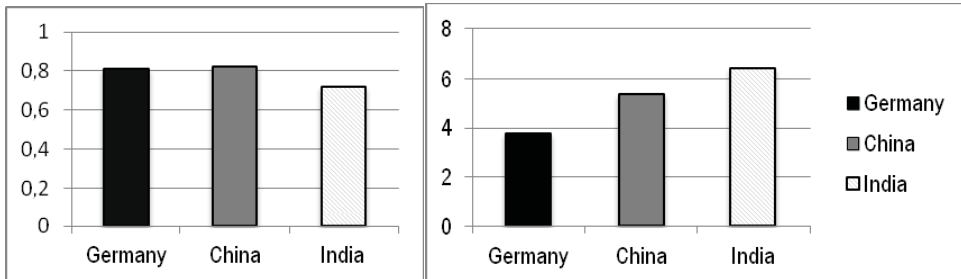
**Table 6: Ordered logistic regression predicting future workplace foreign enterprise**

|                               | Model 1   | Model 2   | Model 3   | Model 4   | Model 5   |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>Independent Variable</b>   |           |           |           |           |           |
| China                         | 2.09****  | 1.84****  | 1.95****  | 1.92****  | 2.01****  |
| India                         | 1.95****  | 1.80***   | 1.85****  | 1.71**    | 1.78**    |
| <b>Control Variables</b>      |           |           |           |           |           |
| <b>Demographics</b>           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Age                           |           | .95       | .95       | 0.97      | 0.97      |
| Male                          |           | .93       | .94       | 1         | 1         |
| Undergraduate                 |           | 1.07      | 1.12      | 1.17      | 1.2       |
| <b>Future</b>                 |           |           |           |           |           |
| Planning ahead                |           |           | 1.54**    |           | 1.42*     |
| <b>Work Expectations</b>      |           |           |           |           |           |
| Pay & Benefits                |           |           |           | 1.88****  | 1.84****  |
| Values & Devel.               |           |           |           | 0.92      | 0.91      |
| <b>Total N</b>                | 1146      | 1126      | 1115      | 1047      | 1039      |
| <b>LR <math>\chi^2</math></b> | 28.01**** | 30.83**** | 41.45**** | 50.94**** | 58.53**** |

Note: Entries are odds ratios. Germany is the reference category. Missing data were deleted listwise.  
+ $p \leq .10$ , \* $p \leq .05$ , \*\* $p \leq .01$ , \*\*\* $p \leq .001$ , \*\*\*\* $p \leq .0001$ .

Hypothesis 2a had to be rejected. Contrary to our expectations, Chinese ( $M=.72$ ,  $SD=.45$ ) students in our sample plan the least for their future compared to Indian ( $M=.82$ ,  $SD=.39$ ) and German ( $M=.81$ ,  $SD=.39$ ) students ( $F(2, 1225)=7.74$ ,  $p=.0005$ ). There is no significant difference between Indian and German students in their planning behavior. Additionally, Hypothesis 2b had to be rejected. We find that among those who plan for the future ( $N=888$ ), Indian ( $M=6.44$  years,  $SD=8.34$ ) students have the longest planning horizon followed by Chinese ( $M=5.37$  years,  $SD=4.06$ ) and German ( $M=3.79$  years,  $SD=2.31$ ) students ( $F(2, 885)=12.70$ ,  $p\leq.0001$ )<sup>1</sup>. Results are shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Country differences in future life planning (y/n, left) and planning horizon (in years, right)**



Based on the structure of the work expectations scale, we were not able to fully replicate Baum and Kabst's (2013) analysis<sup>2</sup>. Since two of the three items that form their work-life comfort dimension (e.g. attractive location and work-life balance) are part of our Pay & Benefits factor, we tested for the difference between the Pay & Benefits dimension and the respective countries (see figure 2) and find significant differences between the countries. Indian students ( $M=4.29$ ,  $SD=.47$ ) value Pay & Benefits more than German ( $M=4.02$ ,  $SD=.36$ ) and Chinese ( $M=4.09$ ,  $SD=.46$ ) students ( $F(2, 1177)=39.24$ ,  $p\leq.0001$ ). The difference between German and Chinese student is also statistically significant ( $F(1, 1177)=4.00$ ,  $p=.046$ ). Although this finding is as expected, we do not know if the items have the same or different importance in India, China, and Germany. To get a better idea of the relative importance of these items, we rank-ordered all work expectation items according to their mean scores for each country separately (see table 7). Contrary to Baum and Kabst (2013), we find that Indian stu-

<sup>1</sup> One of the values for the Indian students (78 years) is extremely high and can be considered as an outlier. When the analysis was rerun without this value, we find the same pattern as before. Indian students plan the longest into the future (6.26 years), followed by Chinese (5.37 years) and German (3.79 years) ( $F(2, 884)=12.95$ ,  $p\leq.0001$ ).

<sup>2</sup> We considered replicating Baum & Kabst's findings through combining the items that comprise their work-life comfort scale. When testing for the internal consistency, however, we found that the coefficient alpha is poor (.33). Therefore we first tested for the differences using the dimension Pay & Benefit that contains two of the three items these authors used. Second, we report on the relative rank in order to get a better idea of the item behavior within countries.

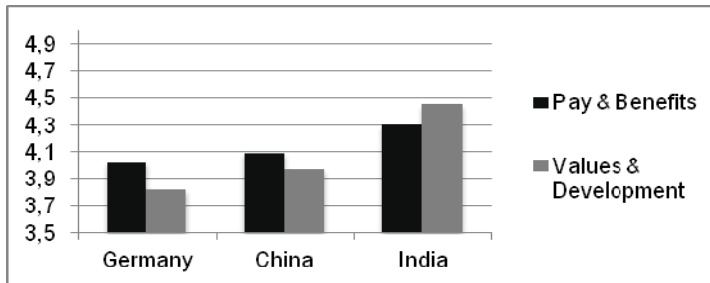
dents value both work-life comfort items (location of company and work-life balance) relatively lower than Chinese and German students. Work-life balance is one of the most important aspects of work expectations; both Chinese and German students assign it the second highest rank, and for Indian students this item ranks 10<sup>th</sup>. The location of the company seems to be less important for all groups; Indians rank it lowest (rank 20), Chinese second (rank 19) and German students the highest (rank 16) relative to the other groups. Additionally, the overall importance of the company's location is low compared to other aspects of work expectations.

We use Values & Development, the second dimension of the work expectation measure, to test hypothesis 4 (*Students from all countries have equally high development expectations*), since this dimension contains two items that address development expectations (see figure 2). Contrary to Baum and Kabst (2013), we find differences in students' development expectations. Therefore, hypothesis 4 was rejected. More concretely, Indian students ( $M=4.43$ ,  $SD=.45$ ) value development more than Chinese ( $M=3.98$ ,  $SD=.55$ ) and German ( $M=3.82$ ,  $SD=.47$ ) students ( $F(2, 1210)=181.90$ ,  $p\leq.0001$ ). All groups are significantly different from one another.

Two items that were initially created targeting professional development were non-salient (promotion possibilities and possibility of a leadership position). We included them in the relative ranking of the mean values of the work expectation items to see how they play into the relative importance of all items. Promotion possibilities are especially important for the Chinese students in this sample (rank 1), but less so for Indian (rank 5) and German students (rank 12). The item possibilities of a leadership position is overall not as important, with rank 11 for German students, rank 14 for Indian and rank 16 for Chinese (see table 7). For both items, there are no statistically significant differences between the countries. Thus, when utilizing the ranking of mean values, we can confirm Baum and Kabst's (2013) finding that student's development expectations do not differ between countries.

To test hypothesis 5 (*Students assign development possibilities a greater importance than high pay*), we drew on both dimensions of the work expectations scale and tested for differences between Pay & Benefits and Values & Development (see figure 2). First, we tested for the sample as a whole, finding no differences between the two dimensions;  $t(1155)=-.99$ ,  $p=.32$ . However, when testing for the countries individually, we find significant differences. In Germany, Pay & Benefits ( $M=4.02$ ,  $SD=.36$ ) are valued higher than Values & Development ( $M=3.82$ ,  $SD=.46$ );  $t(248)=-5.67$ ,  $p\leq.0001$ . The same pattern is true for China: Chinese students regard more tangible work expectations ( $M=4.09$ ,  $SD=.47$ ) as more important than intangible work expectations ( $M=3.97$ ,  $SD=.55$ );  $t(382)=-4.30$ ,  $p\leq.0001$ . However, the opposite is the case for Indian students. Values & Development is more important ( $M=4.45$ ,  $SD=.43$ ) than Pay & Benefits ( $M=4.30$ ,  $SD=.44$ );  $t(523)=6.72$ ,  $p\leq.0001$ . Thus, hypothesis 5 can be confirmed for the Indian context, but has to be rejected for both the German and the Chinese context.

This study predominately uses multi-item scales to test the hypotheses, which are based on different, but similar, items than used in previous research on gender differences. Therefore, we are not able to fully replicate previous research (Machung, 1989;

**Figure 2: Country differences on the work expectation dimensions**

Terjesen et al., 2007). To test hypothesis 6 (*There are gender differences in students' work expectations*), we test for gender differences on both dimensions of the work expectation scale for all countries separately (see table 8). For Pay & Benefits, we confirm hypothesis 6 in all countries. Women consistently value Pay & Benefits higher than men. When considering Values & Development, a more diverse picture emerges. Only for the German context can we confirm the hypothesis; female students ( $M=3.89$ ,  $SD=.42$ ) regard this dimension as more important compared to their male counterparts ( $M=3.68$ ,  $SD=.54$ );  $t(252) = 3.32$ ,  $p=.001$ . No differences were found for Chinese and Indian students.

**Table 7: Relative rank ordering of the work expectation items**

| Item Description                                       |      | Germany           |      | India               |      | China              |      |
|--|------|-------------------|------|---------------------|------|--------------------|------|
|  |      | Rank              | Mean | Rank                | Mean | Rank               | Mean |
| Being successful                                       | F1   | 1                 | 4.57 | 1a                  | 4.73 | 5                  | 4.25 |
| Work-life-balance                                      | F1   | 2                 | 4.48 | 10 <sup>a***</sup>  | 4.43 | 2 <sup>a**</sup>   | 4.31 |
| Good relationship with colleagues                      | n.s. | 3 <sup>a*</sup>   | 4.42 | 6                   | 4.50 | 7                  | 4.21 |
| Learning new things                                    | F2   | 4 <sup>a***</sup> | 4.41 | 2                   | 4.59 | 6                  | 4.22 |
| Good standard of living                                | F1   | 5                 | 4.39 | 7 <sup>a*</sup>     | 4.46 | 3 <sup>a**</sup>   | 4.29 |
| Make my own decisions about how to do job              | n.s. | 6                 | 4.25 | 17                  | 4.27 | 10                 | 4.03 |
| Social benefits  | F1   | 7 <sup>a*</sup>   | 4.18 | 12 <sup>a*</sup>    | 4.33 | 8                  | 4.15 |
| Making use of own knowledge                            | F2   | 8                 | 4.17 | 3                   | 4.54 | 21                 | 3.73 |
| Work environment                                       | F1   | 9                 | 4.09 | 11 <sup>a*</sup>    | 4.39 | 9 <sup>a*</sup>    | 4.13 |
| Appropriate pay  | F1   | 10                | 4.09 | 8 <sup>a**</sup>    | 4.46 | 4                  | 4.27 |
| Possibility of a leadership position                   | n.s. | 11 <sup>b**</sup> | 3.98 | 14                  | 4.31 | 16                 | 3.97 |
| Promotion possibilities                                | n.s. | 12                | 3.85 | 5                   | 4.51 | 1                  | 4.34 |
| Helping people in need                                 | F2   | 13 <sup>a**</sup> | 3.80 | 9                   | 4.43 | 13                 | 3.99 |
| Recognition through supervisor                         | F1   | 14 <sup>a*</sup>  | 3.79 | 15 <sup>a**</sup>   | 4.30 | 11 <sup>a***</sup> | 4.00 |
| Organizational reputation                              | F1   | 15 <sup>a**</sup> | 3.79 | 18                  | 4.24 | 18                 | 3.90 |
| Location of company                                    | F1   | 16                | 3.70 | 20 <sup>a****</sup> | 3.96 | 19                 | 3.90 |
| Making a lot of money                                  | F1   | 17                | 3.67 | 21                  | 3.94 | 20                 | 3.87 |
| Compliance with the contractually agreed working hours | n.s. | 18                | 3.57 | 19 <sup>a*</sup>    | 3.96 | 15                 | 3.98 |
| Having a well-defined career path                      | n.s. | 19                | 3.45 | 4 <sup>a****</sup>  | 4.53 | 14                 | 3.99 |
| Opportunity to do something worthwhile                 | F2   | 20                | 3.41 | 16                  | 4.27 | 17                 | 3.96 |
| Making the world a better place                        | F2   | 21                | 3.31 | 13                  | 4.32 | 12                 | 4.00 |
| Work-related travel                                    | n.s. | 22                | 3.27 | 22                  | 3.67 | 22                 | 3.48 |

Note: Items are abbreviated for convenient presentation. \* $p \leq .05$ , \*\* $p \leq .01$ , \*\*\* $p \leq .001$ , \*\*\*\* $p \leq .0001$ .

a women rate higher, b men rate higher.

F1 Pay & Benefit (factor 1), F2 Values & Development (factor 2), n.s. non-salient



When utilizing the relative rank ordering of the mean values of the items, we find some gender differences (see Table 7). Recognition through the supervisor is the only item that is consistently more valued by women across countries. For India and Germany, women value social benefits more than men ( $p=.022$ ). Female students in India and China regard work-life balance (I:  $p=.003$ , C:  $p=.009$ ), a good standard of living (I:  $p=.03$ , C:  $p=.003$ ), and the work environment (I:  $p=.003$ , C:  $p=.015$ ) as more important than their male counterparts. Female students in India value the location of the company ( $p=.0001$ ), appropriate pay ( $p=.002$ ) and a well-defined career path ( $p=.0001$ ) higher than men. In the German sample, women value good relationships with colleagues ( $p=.026$ ), learning new things ( $p=.0007$ ), possibility of leadership position ( $p=.010$ ), helping people in need ( $p=.005$ ), and organizational reputation ( $p=.009$ ) higher than men.

**Table 8: Gender differences on the work expectations dimensions**

|                       |     | N   | Male       | N   | Female     | Test of independence          |
|-----------------------|-----|-----|------------|-----|------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Germany</b>        |     |     |            |     |            |                               |
| Pay & Benefits        | M<F | 87  | 3.95 (.40) | 162 | 4.06 (.33) | $t(247) = 2.34, p = .02$      |
| Values &. Development | M<F | 88  | 3.68 (.54) | 166 | 3.89 (.42) | $t(252) = 3.32, p = .001$     |
| <b>India</b>          |     |     |            |     |            |                               |
| Pay & Benefits        | M<F | 281 | 4.21 (.49) | 261 | 4.38 (.42) | $t(540) = 4.46, p \leq .0001$ |
| Values & Development  | M=F | 293 | 4.42 (.49) | 270 | 4.45 (.41) | $t(561) = .68, p = .50$       |
| <b>China</b>          |     |     |            |     |            |                               |
| Pay & Benefits        | M<F | 138 | 4.02 (.48) | 249 | 4.13 (.45) | $t(385) = 2.33, p = .02$      |
| Values & Development  | M=F | 142 | 3.97 (.60) | 252 | 3.98 (.51) | $t(392) = .15, p = .88$       |

Note: Values are rounded to two decimals. Sample size ranges due to missing data. Numbers are means, standard deviations in parentheses.

## Discussion

The current student population is the main target group for recruitment efforts by multinational companies. Previous research shows that today's students differ from past generations in their work expectations, for instance, in the extent to which they value having a good work-life balance. It has been unclear to what extent previous findings, which originated predominately in Europe and North America, are generalizable to other cultural contexts. In this study we investigate the differences and similarities of students' work expectations in India, China, and Germany and thereby attempt to close this gap in previous research.

Using exploratory and confirmatory factor analytic techniques, we developed a scale that reliably measures work expectations across countries. The two work expectation dimensions, Pay & Benefit and Values & Development, hold up across cultural contexts as well as across different age groups, gender, and study level. We used these dimensions to test our hypotheses. Our findings were further supported using a relative ranking of the mean values of the individual work expectation items.

German students differ from Chinese and Indian students in the extent to which they value working for foreign companies. For Germans, domestic companies are more attractive as future employers compared to companies under foreign ownership. This finding is consistent with previous trends (Trendence, 2012b, 2012c; Universum, 2012b). Given that our survey did not specify the location of the foreign company, however, we are unable to disentangle the characteristics that influence this finding. Foreign companies, in the way we framed the question, could be located abroad or could have subsidiaries within the country of interest. It is unclear if the German students in our sample are indeed less mobile as opposed to Indian or Chinese students (Kattenbach et al., 2011). Despite this shortcoming that applies to all countries equally, our findings provide interesting insights. The national origin of the employer seems to play an influential role, even when controlling for socio-demographics, planning behavior, and work expectations. Not only should this be further investigated in future research, but also it is of interest for international talent management. Since Germans are more likely to work for domestic companies, while Chinese and Indian students are more likely to work for foreign (including German) companies, German companies thus might want to emphasize the company's origin in their recruitment efforts. In order to be able to make more concrete recommendations, future research should investigate potential reasons for the difference in employer attractiveness according to the country of origin. As soon as these potential influential factors are explored, multinational companies aiming to hire German graduates might want to adjust their recruitment efforts. Possibly, German students find working for foreign companies less desirable because domestic companies are more publicly known. Future research should control for confounding variables such as the organizational reputation or the employer brand. Furthermore, future research should also investigate other potential factors that lead to the decision to work for a foreign company as compared to domestic companies. For instance, it might be interesting to look at differences and similarities in overall career orientations of graduates and to what extent students see their career taking place in a national versus an international context. Additionally, future research should look at organizational factors that contribute, if at all, to the desirability of a future workplace (e.g. company's size, age, product portfolio, and location).

Even though we reject hypothesis 2, our findings add valuable insight into students' planning behavior. In our sample, Chinese students are less likely to plan for the future compared to German and Indian students. This finding does not mirror previous research, indicating that Chinese as well as Indian students have a higher long-term orientation compared to students from European countries (Hofstede, 2001; The Chinese Culture Connection, 1987). In our sample, Indian students plan about 6 years and 5 months ahead, followed by Chinese students (5 years and 4 months) and German students (3 years and 9 months). Multinational companies that aim to recruit in China have long been advised to respect the Confucian tradition that is rather long-term oriented (Hofstede, 2001; The Chinese Culture Connection, 1987). However, as our findings show, the extent to which students are likely to plan for the future differs from previous generations. Some potential reasons lie in China's rapid economic growth, where the increasingly dynamic labor market in China demands

more flexibility from applicants, and an increasing array of work opportunities potentially offset cultural behavior (Hartmann et al., 2010). Our findings fit to the trend that the younger generation sees their career processing in short-term, two to three year stages (Chambers et al., 1998). The short-time planning behavior combined with the top ranked expectation of "promotion possibilities" for Chinese graduates (see table 7) show the importance of visible career steps (e.g. title, responsibilities, and status in the company) that talent management should consider when developing strategies for this ambitious generation. Future research should further investigate planning behavior using multi-item measures as opposed to two single-item questions as in our study. Moreover, we advise a longitudinal approach to be able to track changes over time.

We were able to partly replicate Baum and Kabst's (2013) finding that Indian students are more likely to value aspects of their work life comfort, (e.g. location of the company and work-life balance) compared to German and Chinese students, when testing against the Pay & Benefit dimension. Besides aspects of work-life comfort, this dimension contains other items as well (e.g. the importance of the company's reputation, the work environment, and social benefits). We can therefore broaden our conclusion. Overall, we can say that Indian students value Pay & Benefits more than German and Chinese students. Baum and Kabst's (2013) scale of work-life comfort initially contained three items (work-life balance, location of company, and flexible working time). It would be interesting to see how all three items would behave if used with another sample, both on a scale as well as individually.

When considering the relative rank order of the single work expectation items, Indian students value both location of the company and work-life balance less than their Chinese and German counterparts. Surprisingly, Chinese and German students both ranked work-life balance in second place out of the items (see table 7); for China this seems to be a value change from duty to more individual interests, in contrast to the previous generation (Bu & McKeen, 2000). Multinational companies should be aware of the importance for students in China and Germany of having a balance between work, family, and leisure during their decision-making process on a job offer. Qualitative research might be helpful to further investigate these findings. For instance, it might be possible that students' evaluation of the location heavily depends on their personal situation, the way they were raised, etc. The real-life situation might not be appropriately depicted using survey research; thus, qualitative methods might provide more in-depth insights into the younger generations' rationale.

We were only able to confirm Baum and Kabst (2013)'s finding of no differences on students' development expectations when utilizing the relative rank ordering of the mean values of two non-salient items (promotion possibilities and possibility of a leadership position) that were not part of the work expectation scale. When utilizing the Values & Development dimension, we were not able to confirm hypothesis 4, but were able to find differences of development expectations between the countries. The Values & Development factor contains both development items and items pertaining to an individual's values. In this, we are looking at the differences of development and value expectations of students. Assessing students' wish to make the world a better place or to do something worthwhile might seem odd given the sample of management and engineering students; however, increasingly companies emphasize the goal

to have a social impact and to make a difference in the world (Hemp & Stewart, 2004), a notion that might attract a particular type of employee (Chambers et al., 1998). Future research should confirm our findings using the same scale on a different sample. Furthermore, it might be interesting to investigate to what extent students who score high on Values & Development differ from those who score low, in terms of the selection of their future workplace.

Hypothesis 5 was partly rejected and partly confirmed. Whereas Indian students value personal development higher than more tangible work expectations such as high, thus replicating Baum and Kabst (2013), the opposite seems to be the case for German and Chinese students. This finding is of special interest to HR managers, who seek to recruit from all three countries. A more targeted approach towards recruitment is therefore advisable that incorporates the unique needs of the target population in the respective country. Different opportunities for graduates (e.g. direct entry and trainee programs) and individual career paths could be a promising strategy for talent management.

Gender indeed matters; across countries female students consistently value Pay & Benefits higher than their male counterparts. This finding is interesting. Given that this multi-item measure is equally reliable in all countries, we can broaden previous findings. The combination between appropriate pay, social benefits, and other aspects of work are more important for women than for men in all countries. When looking at rather intangible work expectations, however, a less consistent picture emerges. While female students in Germany significantly differ from the males in this sample, with women regarding Values & Development as more important, we found no gender differences among the Chinese and Indian sub-samples. These findings are of interest to HR managers that aim to recruit a diverse set of employees. Depending on the target talent group they hope to recruit, HR managers might want to consider applying different or similar communication strategies in their job advertising and recruitment processes.

Generally, it is advisable for supervisors of newly hired graduates to pay attention to the disparate needs of their new team members. Similar to previous studies, we also looked at gender differences of the mean values of the individual work expectation items (Terjesen et al., 2007). Men and women value certain aspects of work differently. A unifying finding is that recognition through the supervisor is more important for women in all countries. For other work expectations, a more differentiated picture emerges. Whereas Indian and Chinese women value the more extrinsic aspects of work (e.g. good standard of living, work environment, location of the company, well-defined career path) higher than men, German women seem to appreciate intangible aspects more (e.g. learning new things, helping people in need, relationships with colleagues). Depending on the cultural context of the recruiting company, a more targeted approach towards recruitment and retention might be meaningful, given these gender differences.

### **Contribution, limitations, and conclusion**

There are several academic contributions of this study. First, to our knowledge, this study is the first that developed a scale that reliably measures work expectations of

students in Germany, China, and India. The scale additionally holds up across age groups, gender, and study level. Multinational companies that aim to recruit future employees from diverse cultural backgrounds might use this scale to assess the work expectations of their applicants. Recruitment of talent will never be easy for multinational companies, given the diverse cultural backgrounds of their potential recruits. Talents differ in their values, gender, and cultural backgrounds and might not be attracted to organizations in the same way (Hofstede et al., 2010). However, as our findings suggest and also confirm Baum and Kabst (2013), the countries we study have in fact more commonalities than previously expected. Companies who seek to recruit from India, China, and Germany indeed have the possibility to use a more generalized approach to recruitment than expected from the differences in cultural background. Nevertheless, when considering the ranking of individual work expectations, we find that multinational companies might want to prioritize certain aspects pertaining to culture and gender to effectively recruit their target populations. Therefore, our findings suggest leaving some freedom for local adaptations of talent management strategies to be able to address the specific expectations of graduates.

This study is not without limitations. We used a convenience sample of business management and engineering students from three countries: India, China, and Germany. Given the student subculture, we cannot generalize to different target groups such as young professionals and other countries (Baum & Kabst, 2013; Hofstede, 2001). Future research should test our hypotheses on different populations and cultural settings to investigate the generalizability of our findings. Moreover, the survey was administered in English, a language that is not an official language in Germany and China. All students, however, were enrolled in international programs that were taught in English; therefore, we believe that the difficulties in understanding the survey questions were minor among this particular sample. Furthermore, the items that were used to measure work expectations might not be exhaustive for representing all facets of work expectations. Next, while we establish construct validity of the work expectation scale, we were not able to look at other forms of validity, such as criterion-related validity. Future research is needed to further validate the work expectation scale. Finally, our sample consists largely of undergraduate students, who might pursue graduate studies before taking on their first job. Therefore, their work expectations might change during the course of their graduate studies or might be heavily influenced by the economic environment surrounding them; as such, the validity of our findings might be questionable. While we cannot account for economic environment and acknowledge that our sample has some limitations, our sample contains at least 20% graduate students. However, Baum and Kabst (2013), on whose research we heavily draw, only looked at an undergraduate student population. Given the fact that we establish the generality of the work expectation scale (see table 4), we are confident that this measure appropriately reflects work expectations across study level. Furthermore, when testing hypothesis 1, we control for study level and find no statistically significant differences between the groups (see table 6). Nevertheless, future research might want to use a more balanced sample or focus on graduate students only. Additionally, longitudinal research is desirable to investigate the development of work expectations over the course of both undergraduate and graduate education.



Despite these limitations, this study adds valuable insight into students' work expectations while investigating the differences as well as similarities between cultures and genders. As intended, this study developed a much needed, reliable and valid measure that assesses students' work expectations in three different cultural settings. In times of intensifying demographic, macroeconomic, and societal changes, companies need to focus on talent management as a strategic priority. Attracting new talent is critical to company success. Thus, knowing the concrete needs and preferences of future talents will increase the likelihood of recruiting and retaining a highly qualified workforce. Integrating cultural and gender differences in recruitment and management of talent is essential given the increasing competition among domestic and international companies. To address the specific expectations of their workforce, companies might want to adapt their strategies on the basis of our findings, which indicate the importance of targeted approaches to recruit and retain a much needed, talented workforce.

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